

he will be indebted for any portion of it in this his native country. I will conclude, my dear Kitt, with some advice of a contemporary of these men, which will be of use to you this cold weather, and may prevent your catching cold, which would be of great detriment to one of your rheumatic tendency :—

Mensibus *R* atis ne super lapidem sedeatis.

Never sit on a stone in a month that has an *r* in it.

Yours, &c.

JAMES DAP. COLLEY.

THE EMIGRANTS' VOYAGE TO CANADA.

I SAILED from Scotland for Quebec, in the beginning of summer, and had a great number of emigrants as fellow-passengers. Being all of the lower class, they occupied the steerage, which was divided into various small compartments, that different families might be separated from each other. At first this arrangement seemed unnecessary, for every one evinced the utmost goodwill towards his neighbours,—novelty of situation having created a community of feeling among people who had no connexion or acquaintance with each other. Most of the emigrants were natives of Scotland; but the new circumstances in which they found themselves placed seemed to divest them of much of their natural caution and reserve. When they first came on board, they conversed freely about their private affairs, confided to each other the causes that had respectively induced them to leave home, and mutually offered to use their endeavours to alleviate the inconveniences and discomforts which they expected to encounter during the voyage. Those who felt most afflicted at leaving their native country, employed themselves in anticipating the happiness which they supposed would await them on the other side of the Atlantic, while some, who apparently cared little about home, talked without intermission of the anguish they had suffered when quitting it. All idea of danger seemed to be studiously avoided by every one, and calm seas, cloudless skies, and favourable winds, were talked of, and looked forward to, as the inseparable attendants of a sea voyage.

For two days after we had put to sea, the weather was bright and beautiful. The waves scarcely rocked our ship, as we glided slowly down the Mull of Cantyre, and watched the Highland hills rising in majestic suc-

cession on each side of us, and gradually fading into undefined masses as we receded from them. The emigrants remained almost constantly upon deck. Men, women, and children, loitered about promiscuously, in a state of indolent good humour, and made remarks upon every thing they saw. Some pointed to particular hills, telling their names, and describing the country near them; others dwelt upon the advantages they had foregone in leaving home, and spoke of the wealth, influence, and respectability of their relations; and a few, who appeared to have weighty reasons for not talking about their own affairs, wandered among the various groups, and listened carelessly to what was passing. One man derived a great deal of temporary importance, from his possessing a small work which treated of North America. He placed himself in an elevated situation, and occasionally read such portions of the book as were best calculated to excite the admiration and astonishment of those around him. Many began to consider him a perfect oracle, and when any dispute took place about the new country to which we were hastening, it was invariably referred to his decision. An old woman and her daughter assumed the lead in the female circles. They enumerated the disagreeables of a sea voyage; lamented that they had not become cabin passengers; declared there was no one on board with whom they could associate; and made many allusions to the terrors and anxieties which they believed their friends would suffer on their account. Their auditors permitted them to talk without interruption; for every one seemed willing to let his neighbours exhibit their respective pretensions and characteristics, that he might be the better able

to form a correct estimate of what they really were, and likewise attain some knowledge of the different persons with whom circumstances had placed him in such close contact.

On the evening of the second day, most of the emigrants appeared to think that they had already had large experience of a sea life, and that nothing worse than the past was to be feared or anticipated. Some affected to talk knowingly of nautical affairs ; while others ridiculed all idea of danger, and expressed a wish that a storm might speedily arise, and afford them evidence of the exaggerated accounts which they believed sailors usually gave of the perils and terrors of tempestuous weather. The wind had been gentle and baffling all the afternoon ; but, towards sun-set it freshened and blew a steady breeze. A small sea soon got up, and our vessel, being under easy sail, began to pitch and roll about a little. At first, the emigrants walked backwards and forwards unsteadily, and often caught hold of the ropes that hung within reach ; but, after a little time, most of them stopped, and leaned upon the bulwarks. The conversation gradually became broken and disjointed—those who had taken the most conspicuous part in it said least, and total silence soon ensued. Every one looked scrutinizingly into the face of his neighbour, but seemed averse to undergo a similar inspection himself. The groups that had covered the deck slowly dispersed, and those who composed them could be seen stealing away one by one, and cautiously descending into the steerage. Before the night was far advanced, all were in their births except the seamen.

The wind continued to increase in violence, and next morning it blew hard, and there was a heavy sea and a good deal of rain. A few of the emigrants, who had ventured out of the steerage, were crawling along the deck on all fours, with looks of alarm and anxiety. One man ventured to ask the mate, if he had ever seen such weather before ; and the latter gave a significant look, and said, he hoped not to meet with such again ; but, that God was merciful, and, for his part, he never despaired as long as the planks of the vessel kept together. This reply was listened to with dismay by all who heard it ; and several immediately went

below, and informed their companions, that we were in imminent danger. In a moment the steerage became a scene of tumult and confusion ; parents were heard calling their children around them ; the old women asked for their Bibles ; the young ones sought consolation from their husbands ; prayers and ejaculations were mingled with inquiries which the questioners seemed almost afraid to have answered ; messengers were sent upon deck at intervals, to ascertain the state of the weather ; and some proposed that they should petition the Captain to make sail for the nearest harbour.

The mate distributed the provisions among the emigrants every morning after breakfast, and when the time for doing this arrived, he made the seamen bring the casks of beef and flour upon deck, and likewise a large pair of scales to weigh out the rations. The noise produced by these arrangements, made the people below conceive that the crew were in the act of putting out the boats, and that the ship was in a sinking state. Next moment confirmed their fears, for the mate called down the gangway, "All hands upon deck !" Males and females, and old men and children, began to ascend the stairs with furious haste, and the steerage was soon completely deserted. They all rushed towards the bulwarks, struggling to get as near them as possible, that they might have an early opportunity of embarking in the boats. But when their agitation had a little subsided, and when they saw the mate standing between two casks, and coolly weighing out their rations, they seemed at a loss what to think, and viewed one another with a mingled expression of shame and apprehension. The laughter of the seamen soon made them suspect that they had been imposed upon by imagination ; and the mate bid them advance to receive their respective allowances, saying, it was not likely the vessel would go to the bottom till after dinner, and declaring, that the panic he had occasioned was for the purpose of bringing them upon deck for the benefit of their health. This explanation restored tranquillity, and every one good-humouredly bore the ridicule of his neighbours, because he could retort upon them whenever he chose.

In the course of the day, the wind became more moderate, and we entertained hopes of soon having fine wea-

ther. Many of the emigrants resumed their stations upon deck, and began to amuse themselves in the various ways that their respective circumstances permitted, though they evidently were not so cheerful and confident as when we first set sail. But, towards the afternoon, the increasing violence of the wind interrupted their recreations, and it was not long before we had a strong gale from the west, which reduced us to our courses. The sea ran so high, that the Captain took the helm; and the passengers, on seeing this, thought that things had come to the worst, and manifested strong symptoms of terror and despair. Our ship pitched and rolled very much, and they could hardly stand without support; but, nevertheless, seemed unwilling to go below. The crew, being employed almost everywhere, hurried backwards and forwards, pushing them unceremoniously from side to side, and answering their questions and exclamations with oaths and looks of derision. At last a wave broke over the vessel, and they all, as if under one impulse, descended into the steerage; the gangway hatch of which was immediately closed above them.

A severe attack of sea-sickness obliged me to retire to my birth, which was separated by a thin partition only from the place where all the emigrants lay. I sought repose in vain. The sea beat against the vessel with dreadful noise, and made her timbers creak and quiver from one end to the other; and during the short intervals of external quietness that sometimes occurred, my ears were filled with the moans, sighs, and complaints of those who occupied the steerage. Much tumult, anxiety, and confusion, seemed to prevail among them; and every time the ship rolled more violently than usual, a host of ejaculations, shrieks, and screams, burst from the mouths of men, women, and children; while the rolling of casks, the crashing of earthen ware, and the noise of articles of furniture tossing from side to side, completed the discordant and terrifying combination of sounds.

While listening to the clamours which prevailed on all sides, the mate entered the cabin, and informed me that a man had fallen down the gangway, and was much hurt. I immediately forgot my sea sickness, and rose from my birth and went to his relief.

On reaching the steerage, I found myself in the midst of a scene that was equally ludicrous and distressing; all the emigrants occupied their respective compartments, many of which were so crowded that their inmates actually lay upon one another; and each, at the same time, in his anxiety to retain his place, totally disregarded the comfort and convenience of his neighbours, and extended his legs and arms wherever he thought fit. As often as the motion of the vessel indicated that she was on the point of rolling violently, a general commotion took place among the emigrants—some clung to any objects that were within reach—others stretched themselves along the floor, and a third set tried to resist the anticipated shock by wedging themselves closely together. However, notwithstanding all these precautions, a sudden heave of the ship often dislodged whole families from their births, and hurled them headlong among their companions, who lay on the opposite side. Then screams, complaints, and exclamations of dismay, were exchanged by both parties, while the intruders crawled cautiously back to their former quarters, and began to fortify themselves against the recurrence of a similar accident. The pale countenances, dejected looks, and tremulous motions of the different groups in the steerage, were strikingly opposed to the ruddy complexions, confident deportments, and robust gestures, which they had exhibited when they first came on board. The ardour of enterprize was completely damped, and many of them inveighed bitterly against emigration, and vowed that if they could but once reach home, they would rather starve there than again endanger their lives by making a voyage to a foreign land. I observed one man staggering backwards and forwards, with clasped hands and eyes full of tears. He said he had left a wife and five children on shore, and was certain they would think we were all in the bottom of the sea; for a wind much less violent than that which now raged around us, had once blown down three stacks of chimneys in his native place. An old woman, whom some one was attempting to console with the hopes of favourable weather, replied, that it mattered little to her how things went, for all her best clothes had been spoiled by the breaking of a jar of honey, which she had

foolishly put in the bottom of her trunk. A young girl went about inquiring what we would do when it got dark, for if the wind blew out the lights upon deck, the Captain could not possibly know which way the ship went; and her mother, who was a fisherman's widow, said that her experience of sea matters taught her to know that unless things were differently managed on board, our vessel would soon go to pieces. The man who had fallen down the gangway, met with no sympathy or attention, and I was obliged to order some seamen to carry him to his birth, otherwise he would have been totally neglected.— However, on examination, we found that he was but slightly hurt, and therefore consigned him to the care of one of his relations, and then left the steerage.

The gale continued without the least abatement, and as the violent pitching of the vessel rendered it impossible for one to sit up, or employ himself any way, I returned to my birth. It soon after grew dark, and the situation of all parties became doubly disagreeable and alarming. In the course of the evening I was startled by loud cries, and next moment an old woman and her daughter rushed into the cabin, with looks of terror, and dropping on their knees, said that their time would not now be long, for the vessel had twice been half under water. I at the same moment, heard the brine trickling down the gangway, and consequently supposed we had shipped a sea, but endeavoured to remove their fears, by saying that such things occurred frequently, and did not prove the existence of danger. However, as they remained nearly speechless with dread, I got up, and having taken a bottle of brandy and a glass from the locker, gave the one to the mother, and the other to her daughter, telling them to revive their spirits by drinking a little cordial. They readily agreed to this, and the old woman was in the act of filling up a glassful, when an unexpected rolling of the vessel made her and her daughter slide suddenly over to the opposite side of the cabin. Next moment we swung tremendously in a contrary direction, and the two females were again hurled to leeward, along with a table, several chairs, and a large trunk. The noise was now distracting, and they increa-

sed it by loud shrieks, but still kept firm hold of the articles I had put into their hands; the mother gliding across the floor with the brandy bottle, and the daughter following close behind with the glass. At last, the trunk came into colesion with the back of the former, and hit her such a severe blow that she began so gasp for breath, and soon fell prostrate, on which situation she was firmly pinioned by the weight of a couple of chairs that happened to roll above her. The Captain now entered the cabin, and the scene before him seemed so ludicrous, that he could not refrain from laughter. He immediately released the old woman from her jeopardy, and then administered a liberal portion of brandy to both females, telling them that the worst of the gale was over, and that we would soon have fine weather. Consoled by these assurances, they returned to the steerage, and made the happy intelligence known there, and all we had hoped for was soon realized. The wind suddenly changed its direction, and abated to a gentle breeze, and long ere midnight, tranquillity prevailed both above and below decks.

Next morning we found ourselves sweeping along under the influence of favourable and moderate wind. Most of the emigrants having alike recovered from their fears and their sea sickness, kept the deck, and began to display their respective characters more fully than they had hitherto done. The person who seemed most inclined to take the lead, was a man named M'Arthur, and by profession a distiller. He was tall and raw boned, and had something very whimsical in the expression of his countenance, and in his whole deportment. He walked the deck constantly with his hands in his pockets, observing all that passed, and making remarks upon it to those around him, and whoever disputed his opinions was sure to feel the weight of his ridicule and sarcasm. The person next in importance, bore the appellation of Spiers, and was a thread-maker, according to his own account. He professed to be a man of education and knowledge of the world, and often hinted that misfortunes alone had induced him to abandon his native country and become a steerage passenger. He held, as it were, the situation of master of ceremonies on board, and adjusted all points connected with conduct and be-^y

haviour. A cooper bore the third rank among the emigrants; however, he did not enjoy this elevation because he possessed any personal or intellectual superiority, but merely in consequence of his broad humour, want of perception, and undisguised vulgarity of character. Several other males of the party distinguished themselves in various ways, among whom was an individual who had a smattering of navigation and astronomy, and who usually made his appearance upon deck about mid-day, with a quadrant in his hand. Whenever he saw the Captain preparing to take an observation, he set about doing so likewise, and afterwards committed the results to paper, and remained absolved in the contemplation of them during some hours. He then strutted consequentially along the deck, and scarcely deigned to reply to his fellow-passengers, when they ventured to inquire in what latitude we were, or how many miles we had sailed within a certain space of time. The old woman and her daughter, who were named Burrel, took the lead among the females on board. Having resided in a small village, and been of some importance there, they seemed resolved to maintain the dignity they had once enjoyed, and to exact a proportionable degree of deference from their fellow-passengers. They usually sat near the companion, and entered into conversation with the captain and mate as often as opportunity offered. When they did address any other person, it was with an air of condescension and reserve, and they affected to despise, and undervalue all those things that astonished, amused, or interested, the other emigrants.

The gale of wind we had experienced formed a subject of conversation on board for several days, and almost every one expressed his opinion concerning it. "The hand of Providence alone preserved us from the deep," said an old man; "I warrant ye the best sailor in this ship never saw such weather before. I've been in the way of seeing Lloyd's list, and getting a notion of nautical affairs, but yesterday's tempest beats all I've yet read about."—"We're no accustomed to such adventures," returned another of the emigrants, "and so we think more of them. The Captain took little heed of the weather—there was a greater stock of courage in his little finger than in

all us passengers put together."—"Say nothing about the Captain!" cried a woman; "his behaviour made my blood curdle cold,—instead of saying his prayers, or thinking about the preservation of the Christian people on board his ship, he passed his time in turning round that bit wheel there," (pointing to the apparatus for moving the tiller.)—"You speak without knowledge," returned Mrs Burrel, "if it wasn't for that wheel it would be impossible to manage the ship."—"Ay, ay," answered the first, "I fancy the captain told you so; but I'm rather unfond of believing everything I hear."—"Keep your tongue in order," cried Mrs Burrel; "have you the impudence to tell me that I speak an untruth? Well, well, I thank my stars the ship's no under your command."—"If it was," replied her enraged opponent, "I would give you a hot birth."—"I daresay that," interrupted Mrs Burrel; "and I half deserve such already, for demeaning myself by taking a place in the steerage—I'll be a cabin passenger the next voyage I make—my rich friends will never forgive me for *disconveniencing* myself in this fashion."

"We have at least one comfortable reflection," said Spiers, stepping forward, and raising his voice, "none of us shewed the least want of courage during the hour of danger."—"There was a fine shew of pale faces, though," observed M'Arthur.—"Yes, because we were all sea-sick," replied a young man.—"Sea-sick!" exclaimed Mrs Burrel; "I don't know what you mean. I wasn't sea-sick. I never was sea-sick in my life, and I've made voyages before this."—"I wish I could say as you do, mistress," observed the old man who had spoken first; "however ill I was at the heart, I noticed some things that made me doubt our Captain's skill. I never was on the sea before, indeed, but then I've read Lloyd's List. The wind was direct ahead, but still he kept up the sails. Now, what could be the purpose of that? just to drive us back to the place we came from. In my notion, he should have taken down all his canvass, and cast anchor."—"I have my doubts if he could have found bottom to do that," said a sedate-looking man, who had not hitherto spoken.—"It is astonishing what mistakes prevail about the depth of the sea. It has bottom

everywhere," cried Spiers.—" Ay, ay, your right," returned M'Arthur ; " but the longest thread you ever wound off a pirn, wouldn't reach it where we are now."—" What are you all speaking about?" said Mrs Burrel ; " we've been made acquainted with the depth of the water every two hours since we set sail. Haven't you seen the mate throw a cord with a bit wood at the end of it, over the ship's side, and let it run off a reel till it sinks to the bottom? He then draws it in and looks at it, and so finds out how much water we have below us. The last time he did this I asked what the depth was, and he said, eight miles."—" You are under an egregious mistake," cried the man with the quadrant ; " the instrument you mention is used for the purpose of ascertaining the rate of the ship's progress, and is denominated the log-line. It was invented about the year —" " Oh," interrupted Mrs Burrel, " it's a fine thing to have a greater share of lear than one's neighbours, or maybe impudence. I suspect the mate's wiser than you, notwithstanding the whirligigs you carry about the deck."—" My grandfather had great skill of the sea," said an old woman ; " he used to tell me that it was fifty miles deep in some places, and had mountains of salt in the bottom."—" There's nae use of speaking here," exclaimed Mrs Burrel, angrily ; " the less some folks know, the less they wish to learn."

On the first Sunday that occurred after we had set sail, the weather was calm, sunny, and delightful. The emigrants strolled about the deck in groups, or sat in different parts of the vessel reading their Bibles ; and the seamen, having no duty to perform, participated in the general inactivity. About mid-day, a man who had often before attracted my attention, came up from the steerage, and began to look around him, as if desirous of ascertaining if all the passengers were present ; he then mounted a large cask, and gave out a text from the Scriptures, and proceeded to expound it. A general commotion took place among the emigrants, most of whom seemed too much astonished to think of interrupting him ; however, they soon became quiet again, and listened with undivided attention. The enthusiasm of the preacher became greater the longer he spoke, and he

dealt in a species of eloquence that was well suited to the peculiarity of the scene, and the novelty of his situation. Indeed, the objects around him could hardly fail to have an inspiring effect. On every side a silent and unruffled expanse of ocean stretched to the horizon, which was skirted by long ranges of pyramidal-shaped clouds. These floated, as it were, upon the verge of the sea, and received the full radiance of an unobscured and almost vertical sun, while their serene and unchanging masses had an aspect of mute attention that harmonized completely with the religious impressions produced by the sermon which our orator was then delivering. The ship sometimes rolled gently from side to side, and made the sails flap against the masts, but the noise of this did not at all overpower his voice, which was strong, impressive, and melodious. His audience, consisting of men, women, and children, sat or stood around in various groups ; and several ardent hearers had climbed up the rigging, that they might have a full view of him. After some time he brought forward, and endeavoured to support, a doctrine so new and extravagant, that many of the emigrants began to express their disapprobation by significant looks and gestures. However, he paid no regard to their implied censures, but continued to defend his opinions with additional vehemence and fluency of language, till a slight heaving of the ship made him lose his equilibrium, and he fell down the main hatch, and was followed in his descent by the cask upon which he had stood. Its head unfortunately came out, and a large quantity of flour dropped upon the ill-fated preacher, and whitened every part of his body so completely, that his audience started back, and scarcely knew him when he appeared upon deck again. The Captain, who had sat near the companion during the whole sermon, immediately rose up, and swore he would throw him overboard if he did not pay for the flour he had been the means of destroying. " Can ye expect good without evil, when human creatures are the agents ?" said the preacher. " I am unable to pay for what is lost, but will gladly have it taken off my allowances during the voyage." This proposal was received with great applause by the emigrants, many of

whom, notwithstanding their aversion to the tenets he had inculcated, offered to share their provisions with him ; however, the mate succeeded in appeasing the Captain, and all further alteration ceased.

After this was adjusted, those who had stationed themselves in the rigging began to descend to the deck, but on getting a certain way down the shrouds, they were astonished to find their farther progress impeded by three seamen who stood in a line, and occupied all the foot-ropes. On requesting permission to pass, they were informed that it would not be granted, unless they agreed to pay the forfeit of a bottle of rum, which it was usual to exact from each person when he went aloft the first time. They all declared they had no rum, but the seamen informed them that the Captain would sell as much as they chose. Being unwilling to part with their money, they were puzzled how to act, and began to exclaim against the justness of the demand that was made upon them ; however, their fellow-passengers, instead of attending to these complaints, laughed at their embarrassment, and encouraged the sailors to persist in requiring the customary tribute. Those who had ignorantly exposed themselves to its execution, would not consent to pay it, and remained on the shrouds, exposed to the jeers and taunts of the spectators below, for nearly half an hour. At length a breeze sprung up, the sea became agitated, and the ship began to roll ; their terror was then so great, that they seemed willing to agree to any terms rather than be forced to remain aloft, and therefore promised the sailors all they wanted. They were then permitted to descend to the deck, which they soon reached, amidst the derisive scoffings of their fellow-passengers.

The place in which the seamen slept and took their meals, was close to the bows of the vessel, and on a level with the steerage, from which it was separated by a wooden partition. The hold lay under all, but neither the crew nor the emigrants had any access to it except through the main hatch. About a week after we left port, the former began to complain that they were often disturbed during the night by noises which they could not account for, as they took place in that part of the ship where the cargo was stowed, and where no person could possibly be. A sailor

asserted, that one dark morning, while at the helm, he had seen a white figure standing upon the bowsprit, and that he called to the people of the watch, who were lying about the deck half asleep, but before he could rouse them, the spectre had vanished. Another said, he sometimes heard voices whispering beneath him when he lay in his birth, but could neither tell what they uttered, nor from whom they proceeded, though he believed that the thing that made such noises was at least a fathom below the steerage floor.

The superstitious alarm produced among the seamen by these circumstances, was speedily communicated to the passengers, and the subject underwent so much discussion, that it soon reached the Captain's ears. He affected to treat the matter lightly, saying, there was no room for ghosts in a ship so crowded as ours, and at the same time remarked, that if the stories told by the sailors had any foundation, they were to be accounted for by supposing that some of the emigrants had been playing tricks upon their credulity. The mate, however, did not seem to be satisfied with this explanation, and he took me aside, and stated, that as a strange figure had been seen near the bows of the vessel the preceding night, he intended to watch for its re-appearance, and hoped I would second his purpose.

About twelve o'clock we took our station near the companion ; all the emigrants had retired to their births, and the helmsman and five of his comrades alone remained upon deck. The latter had laid themselves down apparently half asleep, and every thing was silent except the waves, which made noise enough to render our voices undistinguishable at the other end of the vessel. We therefore talked without fear of being overheard by the mysterious visitor whom we expected to see, and as our conversation turned chiefly upon sailors' superstitions, my companion related a story in illustration of the subject. "After making three voyages to the West Indies," said he, "in the capacity of a common seaman, I was discharged, the vessel having changed its owners. I could find no employment for some time, but at last got myself appointed to take charge of a large ship that had been laid up and dismantled during several years. My duty consisted in washing

her decks, keeping her clean, and repairing any thing that went wrong about her works. She lay in a retired part of the harbour, and far from the rest of the shipping, and no one lived on board of her but myself. For the first few days, things went quietly enough, though I must confess I felt rather lonesome at night, particularly when the weather was bad, and often wished that some of the boats which I heard passing and repassing at a distance, would come alongside and leave me a companion. One morning, when in the hold, I observed an old rudder wheel lying among some rubbish. I took it up, and was shocked and astonished to find the skeleton of a man's arm, as far as the shoulder, bound to it with a rope. The flesh had completely decayed, but the sinews and bones remained entire, and the hand still grasped one of the spokes of the wheel, as if in the act of steering. A cold shivering came over me, and I threw the whole into a dark corner, and went about my usual occupations ; however, my mind felt unsettled and uneasy, and I was continually thinking of the human remains I had seen, and wondering how they could have come there. The night that succeeded all this was a very tempestuous one, and the ship being crank and indifferently moored, laboured dreadfully. I lay down in my birth soon after dark, but the more I tried to sleep, the less did I feel inclined to do so ; the wind made a wild and dreary sound among the old shrouds and dismantled masts, that was far more terrifying than its fiercer roarings round a ship in full trim would have been. At length I got tired of lying awake, and went upon deck to see how the weather looked. The moon was in the top of the heavens, but gave almost no light, in consequence of the immense layers of broken black clouds that swept along before her ; however, they sometimes opened for a few moments, and then she suddenly blazed forth like a flash of lightning, and shewed every object around. The second time this happened I thought I saw a man standing at the helm ; I shouted with terror, but no one replied, and I began to suspect that fancy had deceived me ; however, on looking again, I was convinced of the reality of the appearance. He was dressed like a sailor, and stood close to the wheel, having his hands

upon the spokes, and remained motionless, notwithstanding the violent and sudden labourings of the vessel. He had a pale and dejected countenance, and kept his eyes fixed upon the topmasts, like a careful and experienced steersman ; and though I called out several times, he neither changed his position nor appeared to notice me. I took my station within a few yards of him, not daring to approach any nearer, and became, as it were, entranced by fear and curiosity. I gradually thought we were in the middle of a wide ocean, and scudding along before a gale of wind so tremendous, that the dismantled masts rung under its violence. The most terrible seas seemed to swell and burst around us, but the mysterious helmsman brought the ship safely through them all ; and when I looked astern, I saw every thing bright, sunny, and tranquil, though black clouds, lightnings, and a hurricane frowned, flashed, and raged before us. On regaining my recollection, I found myself standing in the very place where I had first lost it, but the spectre had vanished, and no trace of him remained.

" I spent the next day in dreary expectation of again encountering my supernatural visitor ; however, I was agreeably disappointed, and a week passed away without my having once seen him, though I regularly watched for his appearance. At length a gale of wind again occurred, and when midnight arrived, I observed him take his station at the helm in the same way as before, though I could not discover from whence he came, or how he got on board. I soon had a vision similar to the one already described, and on awaking from it, found myself alone. All this took place every night while the storm lasted. You may be sure I rejoiced in the return of fine weather, and subsequently dreaded a wild horizon as much as if I had been at sea.

" After this, the fear of the apparition made me so miserable, that I resolved to look out for another birth. One morning, while full of such thoughts, I saw a boat coming towards the ship, and soon recognized my old friend, Bill Waters, tugging an oar, in company with several other seamen. They soon got alongside, and asked how I did, and were just pushing off again, when I requested Bill to come on board, and spend the day with me,

and take share of my cot at night, for I knew he had sailed in the vessel I then had charge of, and therefore supposed he would be able to tell me something of her history. He readily accepted my invitation, and, in the course of the day, I related all I had seen, and told him how anxious I was to change my quarters. He seemed very much astonished, and remained silent a few minutes, and then asked for a sight of the rudder-wheel and bones. I immediately conducted him to the hold, and he examined the withered arm with great attention, and, on discovering a small ring on one of its shrunken fingers, exclaimed, 'As I live, this limb once belonged to an old comrade of mine, called Henley! Now, I can tell you all about this business.—Oh that our captain were here!—What an infernal devil!—An angel couldn't have steered a whole watch in such weather as we had that night!—But I will explain every thing.' He now proceeded to inform me, that, about five years before, he had gone a voyage in the ship we were then on board of, Henley being one of the crew. Immediately after making land, they encountered tremendous weather, and had every thing washed off the deck by the waves. The gale continued almost a week without intermission, and the seamen at length became so much exhausted that they were hardly able to do duty. One night, when the vessel was scudding under bare poles, Henley, after steering her the usual time, gave the helm to the man whose turn it was to relieve him. The captain thought the former an admirable pilot, but had a pique at him for some cause or other; therefore, when he saw him abandoning his post, he ordered that he should immediately return to it. Henley protested against this; however, the captain became furious, and swore he would be obeyed, and the poor fellow, though worn out with fatigue, was obliged to take the rudder in his hands again. Meanwhile, the merciless tyrant got drunk, and stood watching lest any one should relieve Henley, who soon grew so weak that we were obliged to tie him to the tiller wheel, that he might not fall down, or be pitched overboard. However, an immense wave struck us a-stern, and the shock was so violent that he lost command of the helm;—a sudden jerk of the wheel

tore off his arm, and he got entangled among the ropes, and received various injuries, of which he soon died. Next day they got into port, and shortly set about preparing for sea again; but when every thing was almost ready, the captain declined taking charge of the vessel, and her owners gave the command of her to another person, who made one voyage, and then resigned also. She was afterwards laid up, and they had always found great difficulty in getting any one to keep her, as those who undertook the charge usually begged to be clear of it before the lapse of many weeks, though they invariably refused to give a reason for such inexplicable conduct."

Here the story was interrupted by one of the seamen who came hurriedly towards us, and said he had been awoken by groans and loud noises, which seemed to proceed from some one beneath the place where he slept. The mate immediately procured a lighted lantern, and we all went down into the hold, and examined almost every part of it, without discovering any person, and were on the point of returning to the deck, when the candle flashed on a narrow recess between two rows of water-casks, and shewed a man sitting in it. We started back with horror at the sight of him. He was pale, cadaverous, and emaciated, and his countenance had a frightful expression of villainy and terror. His clothes hung around him in rags, and were marked with blood in several places, while his matted hair and disordered looks combined to render his whole aspect truly horrible.—"In the name of Heaven!" cried the mate, "who are you?—What do you do here?" The figure to whom these questions were addressed made no reply, but sat scowling at us in sullen silence, and we were in the act of advancing towards him, when the seaman who carried the lantern stumbled, and dropt it from his hand, and the candle was immediately extinguished. As none of us felt very willing to remain in the hold amidst total darkness, we all went up the hatch, and waited till our attendant procured another light, and then returned and resumed our investigations.

We found the mysterious intruder in the very spot where we had left him, and would have forced him to give an account of himself, had not our attention been attracted by the

sudden appearance of another being of a similar kind, who was skulking among some bales of goods. His dress and looks betrayed every thing that was abject, depraved, and miserable, and he had a large bloody scar upon one of his cheeks. This second apparition startled us all ; however, the mate seized a handspike, and brandishing it over the head of the first, ordered him to tell where he came from.—“ I wanted to get out to America,” returned he, in a hoarse and faltering voice ; “ I had no money to pay my passage, so I hid myself among the cargo.”—“ And who is that behind you ? ” demanded the mate.—“ A friend of mine,” was the reply—“ He got on board in the same way as I did.”—“ Villains ! devils ! ” exclaimed the mate ; “ they must have committed some dreadful crime and fled from justice.—Look what countenances ! This is a serious business for us. But I shall inform the Captain, and likewise order down several of the crew to guard them.”

He now hastened to the cabin, and roused the Captain, who, as soon as he was made acquainted with the affair, gave directions that the two men should be brought upon deck, where he would shortly attend, and oblige them to give an account of themselves. Meanwhile, the noise of our voices in the hold had awakened some of the emigrants. They easily learned the cause of the disturbance, and of course communicated it to their fellow-passengers, and the whole steerage was soon in a state of commotion. Both men and women got out of their births, and dressed themselves and hurried upon deck ; and before the Captain made his appearance there, an anxious and gazing crowd had lined the bulwarks, and surrounded the two prisoners, who surveyed the whole assemblage with an expression of hardened indifference. A large lantern was placed in such a manner as made its light fall chiefly upon them ; and different groups of passengers could be seen successively coming within the influence of its blaze, as they crowded forward to catch a distinct view of the disturbers of the public peace. Whispers, surmises, and exclamations, passed from mouth to mouth, and every one seemed to exceed another in the uncharitableness of his opinions respecting the characters of the mysterious persons before them ; while some

thanked Heaven that they had not been killed and robbed by such desperadoes, and congratulated themselves that this was the first time they had ever been in the same place with murderers.

However, when the Captain appeared upon deck every one became silent, and listened attentively to what he said. The men being placed before him, he scrutinized them from head to foot, and then asked their names, and inquired what countrymen they were. “ I am called Isaac Hurder,” answered the one we had first discovered, “ and was born in Ireland.”—“ My name is Michael Willans,” said the other ; “ but I don’t know any thing about my native place.”—“ And how have you lived since you came on board this vessel ? ” demanded the Captain.—“ Just as well as we could, please your honour,” returned Hurder. “ We took all we found, and helped ourselves to any thing that was in the way.”—“ Did you intend to remain concealed till we reached Quebec ? ” inquired the Captain.—“ No, no,” replied the former, “ we would have come up from our hiding place, and begged your pardon long ago, but we were afraid to do so till the ship had got out of sight of land ; for you might have sent us ashore again in the boat.”—“ And what have you to say ? ” cried the Captain to Willans, who skulked behind his companion ; “ how came you by that wound upon your cheek ? ”—“ May my soul be eternally damned,” returned he, “ if Hurder didn’t give it me this very night ! —I was nearly murdered by him. When we first came on board, we agreed to divide equally all the provisions that fell into our hands ; but my friend there, curse him ! stole two biscuits to-day, and refused to give me one of them. I was half dead with hunger, and so resolved to have my share right or wrong.—We fought about it, and he struck me on the face, curse him ! and brought the blood, as you see, and would have killed me, hadn’t them men with the lantern stopped him.—But may I be in hell to-morrow if we don’t try another bout before long.”—“ Silence, brutal wretch ! ” cried the Captain. “ What were your reasons for leaving Scotland ? —answer this instant.”—“ Why, because we couldn’t live there,” replied Willans. “ My friend, curse him ! persuaded me to go with him to Ame-

rica, saying as how it was a land of liberty."—"You tell me falsehoods!" exclaimed the Captain. "I know that you and your companion have committed some great crimes, and fled from justice. You are either robbers, murderers, or forgers; but you shall not escape, for I mean to deliver you over to the civil power the moment we reach Quebec; so either look to yourselves, or jump overboard at once. Get out of my sight; and, after this, take care how you come farther aft than the mizen mast."

The Captain now ordered that the two refugees should be strictly watched, and kept separate from the other passengers, and likewise bid the mate give them a small daily allowance of provisions. He then went down to the cabin, and retired to his birth. The emigrants immediately commenced a discussion upon the events of the night, and the proceedings that had recently taken place in their presence. They all seemed highly dissatisfied with the lenient treatment which the felons, (as they called them,) had met with, and unanimously voted that they ought to have been thrown overboard the moment they were discovered. "I daresay the like of this was never heard of," said a woman—"The ship is worse than a jail now—we may be robbed and murdered in our beds before morning—It's a shame that such vagrants should be allowed to dwell among Christians."—"Ay, ay," cried an old man; "we've seen the effect of having bad company among us already—What brought on the storm but these two Jonahs that now walk at large before us? If the Captain had read his Bible he would have used them very differently from what he has done."—"Don't speak of their usage!" exclaimed the female, "for it's too bad. Instead of hanging them, he has ordered that they should get provisions like us. Think of that! We honest folks are obliged to pay a heavy fee for our passage, while vagabonds like them get across the seas without putting down a stiver, and are served with meat besides. Nothing but wickedness thrives in this world."—"It's my private opinion," said a man who had not yet spoken, "that the Captain is no great things himself. I suspect these two fellows are friends of his own in disguise, and he has taken this method of smuggling

them out of the country, to hinder government from getting air of the transaction. Things on board are not what they should be. It's useless to say much now, but I know what I know—mark my words!" He then walked away with a solemn shake of the head, while his fellow-passengers looked reverently after him, and appeared to suspect that he was acquainted with some important circumstances which he did not choose to communicate.

The preacher, already mentioned, delivered another sermon, on the second Sunday that occurred on board, and received much applause and commendation from his auditors. Encouraged by this, he began to imagine that he possessed greater influence over the emigrants than he really did, and accordingly presumed to interfere with their amusements, and to admonish them about their iniquities, whenever he felt inclined. They submitted to this for some time without openly rebelling, but his popularity diminished very fast, and his congregation often criticised his sermons among themselves, and occasionally hinted to one another that he was no better than he should be.

One evening, when we had calm weather, and a tranquil sea, a young man came from the steerage with a violin under his arm, and proposed to his fellow-passengers that they should have a dance. All parties agreed to this, and the decks being cleared as much as possible, a reel was soon formed, and the musician played a Scotch strathspey, which seemed equally to delight the dancers and the spectators. However, the preacher suddenly made his appearance, and interrupted the gaiety, by commanding the partakers of it to desist from such a profane and sinful amusement, if they valued their safety now, and their happiness hereafter. This speech excited universal disgust and derision, and a lively young woman rushed forwards, and seizing upon the disturber of the festivity, pulled him into the ring, saying she was resolved to have him for a partner. A loud laugh broke from the bye-standers; the fiddler began to use his bow; several couples joined in the dance; and the astonished offender was dragged through it, notwithstanding his violent resistance, amidst the shouts and exclamations of the company.

mations of those who witnessed the scene. However, he soon recovered his liberty, and darted into the steerage, where he remained during the whole of next day, but never afterwards attempted to preach before his fellow-passengers. On inquiry it was found that he was a tailor, and could neither read nor write. When this became publicly known, those who had at first been his attentive hearers ridiculed him most, and declared that they had always felt convinced of his incapacity, but were unwilling to lower him in the estimation of others by saying so, as long as he did no harm, and only declaimed against sin in a general way.

Meanwhile we were blessed with fair weather and favourable winds, and made rapid progress across the Atlantic. Most of the emigrants had become reconciled to a sea life, and those who still disliked it consoled themselves with the prospect of soon reaching the termination of the voyage. Though day after day passed in monotonous routine, no one seemed ever to wish for the arrival of the morrow, experience having taught us that nothing new was to be anticipated or looked for, while we remained on board. In the absence of all variety, the most trifling circumstances acquired interest and importance. The appearance of a piece of sea-weed, a flock of birds, or a shoal of fishes, excited the earnest attention of the passengers, and furnished them with subjects of conversation during many succeeding hours ; and it was highly amusing to listen to the different theories that were brought forward in explanation of such phenomena, by the self-important disputants, as they strolled about the decks, or reclined indolently upon the hen-coops. Discussions respecting the distance we were from Quebec took place every day, and, as the captain and mate disdained answering any inquiries upon this point, the emigrants had recourse to the man with the quadrant, (as they called him,) for a solution of their difficulties. He seemed highly flattered by such marks of confidence, and always told consequentially what number of miles of ocean we had still to traverse, though his hearers, had they recollect ed his previous calculations, would sometimes have been startled to find, that, according to him, we were rece-

ding from our place of destination, instead of approaching it.

The two men who had concealed themselves in the hold soon ceased to excite almost any attention. The emigrants studiously avoided the least intercourse with them, and they generally kept near the bows of the vessel during the day, but walked fore and aft at night, when the former had retired to the steerage. They slept under the bottom of the long-boat, no place having been provided for their accommodation below decks.

While crossing the great bank at Newfoundland, the weather was so calm and favourable, that the Captain resolved to lie to for a few hours, that we might have the pleasure of catching some cod. The emigrants, the moment he announced this determination, began to prepare their fishing tackle. Some baited small hooks attached to hair lines, others brought out roads and pirns, and one man produced a pocket-book full of dressed flies, and asked the mate if any of them would do. However, they were soon convinced of the inefficiency of the angling apparatus which they had provided, and as the tackle belonging to the ship was distributed chiefly among the seamen, few of the emigrants had an opportunity of participating in the sports. But those who possessed the means of engaging in it, betrayed the most extravagant delight when they happened to catch any thing, and would not allow the fish they had pulled out to be mingled with those that had been caught by others, though the Captain informed them that a general division of the spoil would take place in the course of the day. After laying to some hours, the wind began to freshen, and we set sail. The mate then distributed the fish in equal portions among the steerage passengers, but, although he observed the strictest impartiality, much dissatisfaction prevailed, and almost every one thought his neighbour had been more liberally dealt with than himself. Complaints and accusations were heard upon deck all day long, and the morning's diversion, instead of adding to the enjoyment of those for whose sakes it was projected, gave birth to discontent, envy, and recrimination.

While we were in the Gulf of St Lawrence, the Captain and mate began to be on very bad terms. The

latter kept the key of the store-room, which contained the provisions, and daily weighed out to the passengers their respective allowances ; but the Captain suspected that he was in the habit of abstracting an extra quantity, and afterwards privately selling it to the emigrants. Various articles had disappeared at different times, and he professed to be unable to explain what had become of them. This roused the Captain's attention, and, being a violent man, he one day accused the mate of fraud and peculation before all the emigrants, and stated, that there were three persons on board who could give evidence in proof of what he said. The former denied the charge with boldness, and a furious altercation took place between the two, which terminated in the mate's requesting permission to go forward among the seamen, or, in other words, to resign his situation. The Captain told him the sooner he did so the better, and, accordingly, he carried his trunk from the cabin that very day, and took up his quarters in the steerage.

All the passengers felt a deep interest in this quarrel, for they conceived, from the hints which the Captain had thrown out respecting the persons who could prove his assertions, that their characters were implicated in it. They therefore discussed the matter at great length among themselves, and almost unanimously agreed that the mate was innocent of the crimes laid to his charge. The females advocated his cause with much warmth ; for his politeness, good looks, and misfortunes, had won their hearts completely. Some proposed to petition the governor in his favour whenever we reached Quebec, and a man, who had neither shoes on his feet, nor a hat on his head, urged that a subscription should be raised to compensate him for the loss of his situation. However, it was finally agreed that a certificate of his innocence and good conduct, signed by every one on board, would answer the best purpose. Several of the leading persons soon prepared this document, and went about requesting their fellow-passengers to put their names under it, none of whom made any objection, except the man with the quadrant, who, on the paper being presented him for signature, said he would have nothing to do with it, unless the longi-

tude and latitude in which the events referred to took place, were inserted at full length. No one disputed the reasonableness of this demand, and the business was soon adjusted to the satisfaction of all parties.

The ship remained without a mate during two days, but in consequence of the favourableness of the weather, we suffered little from the want of him. The morning of the third set all things to rights again ; for one of the emigrants informed the Captain that he had heard Hurder and his companion whispering together in the store-room the preceding night. On examination, we found that a considerable portion of the floor of the apartment was loose, and that the two fellows could have access to the provisions whenever they chose. They were immediately searched, and several articles being found upon them, the Captain had no longer any suspicion of the mate's integrity, and at once restored him to favour, and begged him to resume his situation, and forget the past. He willingly did so, and received the congratulations of all the emigrants, except those who had drawn up the certificate about his honesty, and who said, they thought the Captain ought to have made him prove his innocence before he reinstated him in his employment.

When a little way above the mouth of the St Lawrence, we were becalmed nearly a whole day within half a mile of a large ship. The emigrants indulged in various speculations about the port she sailed from, her place of destination, her tonnage, her crew, and her cargo ; and had got deeply involved in hypothetical mazes, when they saw her jolly-boat let down. A number of men then stepped on board, and immediately began to row towards us. Our female passengers, on seeing this, descended into the steerage, but shortly came upon deck again, arrayed in clean caps, gaudy ribbons, and Sunday gowns ; and endeavoured to attract the admiration of our expected visitors by talking affectedly, and leaning over the bulwarks ; while the men stood eyeing them askance, with a repulsive, scrutinizing, and suspicious expression of countenance, very often assumed by the Scotch peasantry when they are on the point of coming into contact with strangers. The boat soon came alongside, and most of the party sprung on

board our vessel, without salutation or ceremony. They proved to be Englishmen, but any observer would have instantly discovered this from their ruddy, comfortable-looking countenances, which appeared to much advantage when contrasted with the hard, spare, emaciated features, of the people on board our ship. Nautical inquiries soon took place, and our visitors informed us that they were emigrants bound for Upper Canada. This intelligence did not appear to be much relished by our passengers, one of whom immediately stepped forward, and asked if they had any coopers in their party. Being answered in the negative, he expressed great satisfaction, and said he was a cooper himself, and wished to be first in market. This speech excited a laugh, which, in some degree, removed the restraint that had previously prevailed, and rendered both parties more communicative. The Englishmen were then requested to mention what sort of trades-people and mechanics they had on board their vessel, and the emigrants assembled round them, and listened anxiously to the agitating enumeration. When it happened that persons of the same profession were shewn to be in both ships, a loud laugh of derision took place, and a number of uplifted fingers pointed out the unfortunate man who had, in a manner, encountered competitors before reaching the theatre of action; but an opposite discovery afforded delight to none, but the individual who was personally interested, and sneers about good fortune and lucky fools passed between those that stood around him.

The Englishmen, after having given a full account of themselves, and of their purposes and intentions, returned to their own vessel. At night, we got a fine breeze directly astern, and stood up the St Lawrence under all sail, much to the satisfaction of the emigrants, who were exceedingly anxious that we should reach Quebec before the other ship; for they supposed, that if she arrived first, her passengers would take all the land that was to be granted in the vicinity of the town, and render it necessary for the last-comers to settle far away in the woods. It was useless to attempt to combat this idea, or to state, that the ground destined for them lay in the interior of the country, for they shook their heads

incredulously, and said, they derived their information from a man who had read books upon the subject, and knew all about the matter.

In the morning we found ourselves a considerable way up the St Lawrence, the gradually increasing narrowness of which now permitted us to have a more distinct view of its banks, the farther we advanced. The emigrants contemplated with delight, the fields, trees, cattle, and farm-houses, that occasionally presented themselves on both sides, and spoke enthusiastically of the pleasures of a country life, and wished they could get ashore, to drink milk, and lie on the grass. They seemed quite relieved to discover that the habitations, vegetable productions, and general appearance of Canada, were neither comfortless, extraordinary, nor revolting. Their spirits got up, and they began to anticipate the blessings and enjoyments which a residence in such a country would be the means of securing to them, and informed each other what particular branches of agriculture they intended chiefly to pursue, when they had cleared and improved their farms, and overcome their first difficulties. The conversation soon turned entirely upon crops, soils, and manure; and weavers, who, before embarking for America, had never been beyond the suburbs of Glasgow, talked about the management of land with the greatest confidence, and suggested the propriety of partially introducing the British system of agriculture into Canada.

We reached the harbour of Quebec late one afternoon, and immediately dropped anchor in front of the town. The emigrants gazed on the rocks, the tremendous battlements, the shipping, and the boats hurrying backwards and forwards, with deep interest; while those who had any knowledge of history, began to talk of the celebrated siege at which Wolfe was killed, and pointed out, to their admiring auditors, in what manner they conceived the city might yet be taken by an enemy. Others complained how much the prospects around had disappointed them, and said, Quebec was just like a Scotch town, and therefore not worth looking at. One man asserted, that the fortifications of Edinburgh Castle were much stronger than those they then saw, and this produced a dispute, which was interrupted by the arrival

of the harbour-master, who came alongside in a beautiful boat manned with French Canadians. He ordered all the passengers to be mustered upon deck, and called them over, that he might ascertain if each individual answered the description annexed to his name in the Custom-house list. This being accomplished, the Captain desired Hurder and his companion to come forward, and then explained to the harbour-master how they had got into the ship without his knowledge or consent. The former bid the mate detain them on board until farther orders, and then took leave, after his crew had received a quantity of provisions as their usual perquisite.

None of the emigrants went ashore that night. They continued walking the deck till a late hour, and anticipating the pleasure they would have in rambling through Quebec next morning. Montreal was the place of our ship's destination, and the greater part of them meant to remain on board until we reached that city, in order to save the expence of going there in a steam-boat.

At an early hour on the succeeding day, all the emigrants were in motion. The Captain informed them that the vessel would lie at anchor for two days, and that those who chose might go ashore and visit the town, provided they returned on board within the time specified. This intelligence being promulgated, many of the females and young men hastened to dress themselves in their best apparel, that they might be ready to secure places in the ship's boat, the first time it was sent

ashore. But some, who had talked much of the great connexions they had in Quebec, the letters of introduction and recommendation they were provided with, and the flattering attentions they expected to receive when they delivered them, seemed suddenly to forget all these things, and to become alike friendless and unknown. They never even proposed to visit that city, which had once been a place of such promise to them, although it lay directly before their eyes. Others, who were prevented by the deficiencies of their wardrobes from making a respectable appearance, declared that they would rather remain on board, than wander through dusty streets, where nothing at all remarkable or interesting was to be seen. Pride soothed the pangs of disappointment during the day, and at night envy found a balm in the triumph of ill-nature; for those who had been ashore came back weary, dispirited, and out of humour, and again took up their abodes in the steerage, and endeavoured to console themselves with the hope of finding Montreal a prettier, larger, and more entertaining town than Quebec.

I left the ship next morning, and on the succeeding day saw her bear up the St Lawrence, under the influence of a favourable wind. The emigrants waved their hats to me, and I accompanied my return of the salute with fervent wishes that the comforts, blessings, and advantages of the land to which they were hastening, might exceed their warmest and earliest anticipations.

TRANSLATIONS FROM OSSIAN.

MR NORTH,
WITH this I send you some specimens of translation from the great Northern Bard of antiquity, whose works—thanks to the fostering care and fatherly protection of some one or other—have come to us in tolerable preservation; yet whose very existence, (mirabile dictu!) is a matter of the strongest doubt. As to the authenticity of the works ascribed to Ossian, there is certainly abundant cause for scepticism; and from the days of Samuel Johnson, down to those of Malcolm Laing, Wordsworth, and the author of *Waverley*, it has furnished an inexhaustible subject for the exhibition

of hypothetical conjecture and antiquarian research. But to the reader of poetry,—to him who loves beautiful imagery, sublime sentiment, and deep pathos for the corresponding feelings which they awaken in the bosom, wholly unconnected with their tendency to any particular bias, it must be a matter of moonshine whether the whole, or only a part, was generated by the son of Fingal, or if the entire structure was elaborated within the pericranium of our more modern friend, James Macpherson, Esq. Are the writings of Rowley destitute of merit, because we know them to be the composition of the boy Chatterton?

It is curious to observe what an effect this rage for antiquity produces, and how it is capable of altering our estimation of the intrinsic value of things, as if either age or scarcity ought to confer true value on things which must have been, and ought ever to be considered as trifling ; yet they do so, whether it be on a cracked Roman jar, or a Queen Anne's farthing. An additional eclogue of Virgil would weigh down, in our eyes, a whole bale of common-place Herculaneum manuscripts, whether rolled or unrolled ; so I suppose I have not the least chance of ever being numbered among the associates of the Antiquarian Society.

Verily, Mr North, the mind of man is a strange thing, and a heterogeneous compound. In confirmation of this particular tendency in our nature of which we are now speaking, we have almost uniformly found, that they who believe in the age and authenticity of Ossian, will award him no lower a station than among the Homers, Dantes, Miltos, and Shakespeares ; whereas, such as consider him a modern fiction, will be contented with nothing less than a condemnation of the whole mass, as little better than rant, bombast, and fustian,—merely because it is written by Maepherson ; as if there was no such thing as sterling merit, or as if a standard of real poetical excellence could exist only in the reader's imagination. We remember a speech of Lord Chatham's, which says, that " youth cannot be imputed to any man as a reproach ;" nor can recent production, we should suppose in the same way, be considered a blemish, (as Mr Hazlitt would fain have it,) in any work. It is surely no fault in Scott, Byron, or Campbell, that they have not lived and been gathered to their fathers some thousand years ago.

The works of Ossian, in the state in which they are served up to us by Maepherson, may be considered rather as the raw materials of poetry, than as exhibiting that art, condensation, and selection of thought, which are requisite to form a finished composition. There is a thronging—a profused assemblage of lofty and magnificent imagery, seen in the distance, rapidly shifting, shadowing, and indistinct. " The glory and the splendour of a dream," united with its obscurity and

its perplexing remoteness. We hold not converse with human flesh and blood, but with heroic spectres, " who pace about the hills continually," and that come to us from the breast of the ocean. There are neither cities, nor civilization, nor society ; but the wanderings, and wars, the impulses of nature, and passion in its untamed empire. Mossy stones mark out the dwellings of the dead ; the wind curls the wave, swells the sail, and agitates the forest ; and the silence of night is broken by gibbering voices, and " airy tongues that syllable mens' names on sands, and shores, and desert wildernes."

Yet, in the narration of the adventures, and in the construction of the fables, a wonderful stretch of invention is exhibited ; and a method is visible, even in the most irregular and inconsistent parts, which is not a little surprising. The Epic of Fingal contains some passages of heroic beauty, which would thrill the blood of a coward, and make him long to be a soldier ; while the Songs of Selma abound in touches of the most deep and the most artless pathos.

It is strange that Wordsworth, who has studied so profoundly, and so successfully, the philosophy of the material world, should make the never-ending delineation of natural objects and appearances in these works, the theme of his scepticism as to their authenticity, and of his non-belief concerning the blind Ossian, as if blindness is not affirmed of Homer, and known of Milton. If Wordsworth has ever dipped into the poems of Blacklock—who was born blind—he may there discover that a power of describing the material world, in all the variety and vicissitude of its presentations, may be attained, either from a successful mental effort in retaining the delineations of others ; or, by a kind of intuitive perception,—though, after the experiment of Locke with his blind man, who thought scarlet colour like the sound of a trumpet, we would rather imagine not.

Moore, in his Introduction to his Irish Melodies, has thrown out a needless sarcasm in saying, that if Ireland could have Burns, she would willingly give up all claim to Ossian, as if there was one point of similarity in the constitution of their genius, or as if one point of comparison could be